

Tale Feathers

August
2006

Volume 73
Number 5

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2007 Calendar of
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Report

....and much
more!

"SURVEY SAYS....."

President's Report

Torrey Berger

The results of our recent membership survey are in and have been tabulated and analyzed. Following are comments on some of the survey results:

We greatly appreciate that slightly more than seventy-five of our membership took the time to fill out and return the survey. Many of those who returned the survey also indicated a willingness to participate in our activities, and if you are one of those, and you provided your phone number, you will be receiving a call from us in the near future. There were many very helpful comments made by many respondents, and we are thankful for the extra time and effort which went into those.

Generally speaking, the survey results indicate that the membership likes what we are doing and how we are doing it. There is some indication that they would like to see us do more.

The primary interest of the membership is nature or natural experience followed closely by conservation issues. There is some indication that we need to be more communicative as to conservation issues and what we, as an organization, are doing to address these.

It appears that our programs are in line with the topics preferred by membership (i.e., (1) natural history, (2) travelogue, (3) "How To's", and (4) conservation issues, in that order, but fairly close numbers).

Survey results indicate that there is a desire for more nature articles and conservation coverage is the newsletter, along with continued announcements with respect to field trips and programs.

In the conservation area, it appears that there are a good number who would like to participate in bird surveys and "citizen science" activities and we need to find a better way to make those opportunities available. We also need to explore the possibilities for field trips aimed specifically for the beginning birder and for those who have children who can participate.

It appears that although membership is highly computer literate, there is little use of our web page. We will need to explore the possibilities for publicizing the site. The items mentioned above are just some of the highlights revealed in the survey responses. This year is scheduled time for St. Louis Audubon to revisit its Strategic Plan, and the information in the survey will be of great assistance as we begin that process.

St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities

and

Announcements

Mission Statement
of
The St. Louis
Audubon Society

Help our community
sustain biological
Diversity through
Nature.

Goals
To foster an aware-
ness and under-
standing
of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our com-
munity so people
can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON EDUCATION COMMITTEE NEEDS NEW RECRUITS!!

The Education Committee will be conducting training sessions for new members interested in working with us on future presentations. We will cover the programs we present to our schools, civic groups, scouts, etc. These sessions will be held at Powder Valley Nature Center from 7:00 - 9:00 pm on Wed., Sept. 20 and another date TBA (the original date was found to be in conflict with another Audubon meeting) in the next newsletter.

If you are interested, please contact Sharon Nickl at 636-391-8751. We would like a head count to prepare for the training. No prior experience is needed and additional on the job training will follow—no one will be asked to do a presentation until they feel they are ready.

LITZSINGER ROAD ECOLOGY CENTER SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

If you're looking for a reason to be outdoors more, consider volunteering at the Litzsinger Road Ecology Center (LREC). Horticulture volunteers assist ecological restoration through native plant propagation and invasive species removal and may begin volunteering at any time.

Education volunteer training will begin on Monday, Sept. 11 and runs consecutive Mondays through Nov. 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. During training, volunteers will become familiar with the site, learn inquiry-based teaching strategies, and gain an understanding of basic ecology. Trainees will have many opportunities to observe school groups and practice teaching.

LREC is located on 34 acres in the heart of metropolitan St. Louis. Managed by the Missouri Botanical Garden, LREC partners with students and educators to investigate and restore local ecosystems, including a bottomland forest, tall grass prairie and an urban creek. For more information contact Jackie Juras at (314) 577-5187.

FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION
ON BIRDWALKS, SUBMIT PHOTOS, OR MORE
INFORMATION, CHECK OUT:
www.stlouisaudubon.org

Birding Trips for September

John Solodar

September 9, Saturday. Tower Grove Park - Join Torrey Berger in a search for fall migrants in Tower Grove Park starting at 8:00 AM. Lots of birds should be coming through by this date. We'll meet just east of the Gaddy Bird Garden.

September 23, Saturday - Carlyle Lake Pelagic.

Once again we head to Carlyle Lake for this all day, three-part trip. Land birds and some waterfowl will be in order in the morning. Jim Malone and Joe Eades will meet birders at 6:30 AM in the McDonald's parking lot in the town of Carlyle, IL. If you choose not to make it that early, you can catch up with the group in Hazlet State Park at the Cherokee Hiking Trail area. For part two we will be on the lake for Sabine's and other Gulls and possibly some Phalaropes at mid-day. You should plan to be at the West Access Marina, which is a little way south of the road to Cherokee Hiking Trail, no later than 10:15 AM. The boats will leave at 10:30 AM promptly. (Reservations are required for the boat trip which will cost \$25.00 per person.) After the boat trip we will finish at parking lot # 3 and search for shorebirds. Sometimes the group has met for dinner at the end. Joe Eades is coordinating reservations for the boat trip. Contact him by e-mail at joseph.w.eades@monsanto.com.

How to get there

Tower Grove Park (Gaddy Bird Garden)- Within the city of St. Louis, go from I-44 or I-64 (Highway 40) to south Kingshighway. From I-64 go about 1 mile to left on Magnolia. Park on street; walk to the east side of the brushy area (Gaddy Bird Garden) at the northwest corner of the park. We'll meet by the yellow Gaddy Bird Garden sign.

Carlyle Lake - Take I-64 east across the Poplar Street Bridge. Exit I-64 at Hwy 50 East (toward Carlyle), where Hwy 158 crosses I-64. Follow Hwy 50 to Hwy 127 and turn left at the junction. Turn right into McDonald's. Meet in the parking lot. There are a couple of motels close to the McDonald's for those who would prefer to drive over the evening before.



BIRD FEEDER???

Picture submitted by Mitch Leachman

The SLAS Board of Directors
wishes to extend a Thank-you
to all members and non-members
who sent in survey forms.

Your opinion matters!
If you included your phone number
you will here from us soon.
Thank-you for your participation!

The Board of Directors
wish to Thank
Jim & Mary Ann Quade
for their contributions to the St. Louis Audubon
Society in memory of
Marguarite Harris

Kids Write the Best Letters!
Sharon Nickl

The Education Committee presents many programs throughout the year in several schools. Some of the teachers of the classes where a program was done have their students send Thank You notes to our presenters. The following letters were from some 2nd grade students in one of the Rockwood Schools for a Bird Program presented by Vicki Flier and Bobbi Poor. We thought everyone would enjoy reading just a few of the comments of the students. These are typed as written by the children:

Dear Bird Presenters,
Thank-you for teaching me about birds. It was interesting to learn about
Different kind of birds and what they eat and where they live. I enjoyed seeing those birds that you brought with you. Also thank you for telling me that I should recycle more for the birds. Thank-you!
Your Friend....Abby

Dear Bird Ladies;
Thank you for coming to our school to teach us about birds. The best part was when I got to see the dead birds.
Sincerely, Rich

Dear Bird ladies,
Thank you so much for teaching us about birds, it was so cool to see all different kinds of birds and there cool beak. My favorite part was when you showed the owls there beak looks very, very, very sharp and neat!
Sincerely, Keely

Dear Bird Presenters,
Thank you for teching us about birds. I learned that birds have longer or shorter becks My favorite bird was the carndel but My real favorite one is a blue bird or blue J. you techn me so much some I have never learned before. I did not know much. I like small birds. I REAL-
LY ENJOYED the presentation. Your friend, Taryn

Dear Vicki and Bobbi,
Thank you for teching us about birds. I love birds. Birds are one of my faveret animils. I didn't now moch about birds but now I do. Birds are interesting anmails. Do you love birds? My brouther said that he did not like birds but I tould stof to my brouther it truns out he loves birds. My friend has a bird. My faveret bird is the cardnle. What is your faveret bird? A lot of my friends First faveret anmile is a bird. A lot of my family love birds. I love birds so so so much. I now a lot about birds now. I bet a lot of people love birds now in my class. I love birds!!!
Your friend, Megan

(Editor's Note: Spell and Grammar check was having a hard time with the children's letters!!)



Beginners Birding Trips
John Solodar

St. Louis Audubon Society is initiating a new program this year aimed at people who are absolute beginners in birding. In general, our regular bird walks are designed to accommodate beginners, but our recent member survey revealed that some beginners feel uncomfortable being in a larger group with experienced birders.

To help these people we will conduct a series of three birding trips just for them. The three trips will be on November 18, 2006 at Busch Conservation area, January 13, 2007 at Riverlands and May 12 at Forest Park. The leaders for these trips will be experienced birders from our regular corps of leader volunteers. Look for further announcements in *Tale Feathers* preceding each trip.

Weekday Birding Trips

John Solodar

Our recent member survey turned up the fact that some members would like us to offer weekday birding trips in addition to our normal Saturday trips. We have scheduled four Wednesday trips for the upcoming season in order to gauge interest. If participation is good we will offer more next season.

The trips that we will offer this year are on October 25, 2006 at Busch Conservation Area/Weldon Springs, January 24, 2007 at Riverlands, May 2, 2007 at Tower Grove Park and May 16, 2007 Shaw Nature Reserve. Pat Lueders has offered to lead three of the trips and we are delighted to have her help. Details about the individual trips will be found in future issues of *Tale Feathers*.

National Audubon Society
Central Region Election
Results

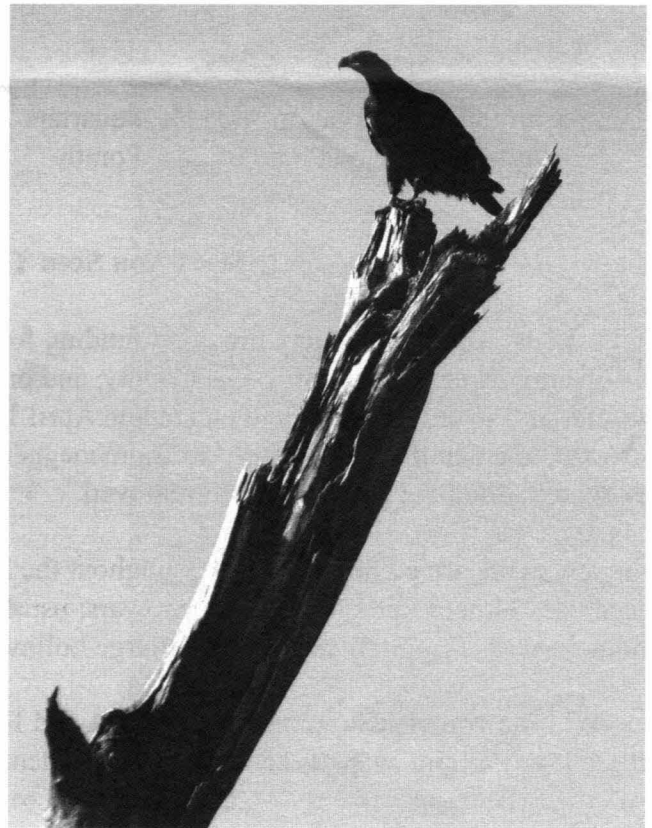
The regular election by Audubon chapters in the Central Election Region to select a nominee for the position on the NAS Board of Directors is complete. The ballots were counted on Monday, July 3, and the nominee has been contacted.

The candidate is Peter Cannon Jr.

22 chapters voted out of 78 in the region.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this election. Peter Cannon's name will be placed on the slate of nominees to the Board that is

voted upon at the
Annual Meeting of Members in
January, 2007



Golden Eagle acts as a sentinel on the Mississippi River.

Picture submitted by Juanita Shore



Columbia Bottom Conservation Area Headquarters and Chimney Swift Tower. Photo by Joel Porath



Emmenegger Nature Park, Kirkwood, MO
Photo by Joel Porath

Have You Seen These Strange Objects?

The St. Louis Audubon Society provided funding for 2 chimney swift towers: one at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area in north St. Louis County, and one at Emmenegger Nature Park in Kirkwood. These towers were built over the winter and erected on April 1, 2006 as part of an Eagle Scout project by Ran Rodgers. Note that the tower placed in Emmenegger Park has bracing on it that was there to support while the concrete dried but has since been removed.

Chimney swifts are commonly seen throughout the St. Louis area in spring and summer. These swifts do indeed use chimneys or similar hollow towers; usually well down from the opening to keep well shaded. Chimney swifts originally nested inside large hollow trees, which are not in great abundance any longer.

The next time you visit Columbia Bottom CA and Emmenegger Nature Park, be sure to look for the towers and see if any Chimney swift have taken up residency.

Mississippi Kites

By Dency Kahn

Once I had Mississippi Kites circling overhead summers almost every time I looked. That ended early summer 2005, though it wasn't until August that I knew why. I was out clearing my lawn after a powerful electrical storm when I saw a kite perched in a dead tree across the street. I started moving as close as I dared, when I heard a call from the top of the sweet gum in my front yard and saw a second kite on a nest. They were back the next day, and the next, with a third kite I took to be their chick of the year, and then they were gone for the year. It was exciting to have had them, and equally embarrassing to have missed them until then.

This year I watched MO-BIRDS carefully to see reports on their return, which was the first week of May. On the 8th, the day after ASM weekend, I saw a kite swoop in low, level with the rooftop, with a stick in her beak. Once again, I noticed that they were not circling overhead. In all, during the nest building period, until June 8th, I saw them a total of three times, each time coming in low so as not to draw attention to their presence. Only once during this month did I see one soaring overhead. I checked the nest every two or three days and first saw incubation on June 8th. Thereafter I could go out almost every morning and find one kite on the nest and the second perched nearby preening, appearing to relax after a night spent incubating. This behavior changed around July 8th, about when the eggs were due to hatch by my calculations. There is still always a bird on the nest, but no longer a second perched nearby. I expect she is hunting, though I have yet to see a baby or babies get fed. And so far, no little heads have been observed, just an alert parent.

Although I am still embarrassed that I missed them last year, I can excuse myself easier after having seen how secretively the kites approach the nest site. They even quit hunting in the neighborhood of the nest. The nest is not visible from my yard; I have to walk into the middle of the street before turning and looking up to see it. To see a photo of the nest, go to

<http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/photos.htm>

The nest failed the evening of July 19th, during the powerful thunderstorms that came through St. Louis. Every time I checked, a parent was perched as closely as possible to the nest. This morning only a few twigs were left. Mary Dueren and Judy Rowe were checking it with a spotting scope when the storm moved in last night, and Mary had just established that there were two chicks. No sign of them the next morning.

Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2,200 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Mary Dueren edits the newsletter. To contact the editor, call evenings to 314-576-1473 or email: mdueren@charter.net.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2006-2007

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As a joint member with National Audubon, you will receive National Audubon's quarterly magazine (Audubon) as well as St. Louis Audubon Society's Newsletter (Tale Feathers). Now you also have the opportunity to join only the St. Louis Audubon Society, receive Tale Feathers, and participate in the educational and conservation activities of St. Louis Audubon. There is no distinction between individual and family membership. Dues cover all members at the same address. For information, call (314) 822-6595.

Use this form to join St. Louis Audubon / National Audubon

For joint membership in St. Louis Audubon Society and National Audubon Society, Make checks payable to **National Audubon Society** and mail to St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O.Box 220227, Kirkwood, MO. 63122

_____ Membership/\$35 For renewal in the National Audubon Society, we recommend that you use the forms supplied by National Audubon. For more information, contact Anne Rankin Horton at 636-256-3402.

_____ Introductory Membership / \$20 _____ Special Two -Year Introductory Membership / \$30

_____ Senior Citizen (62 and older) / \$15 (New and renewal) _____ Student / \$15 (New and renewal)

Membership in only the St. Louis Audubon Society: SEE INSIDE LAST PAGE FOR DETAILS

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

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